

Birds of a Feather

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Summary: She's the queen of the Highlands, and he's the Viking that's come to her with a treaty in hand. However, they soon learn they both are so much more than just that. And all the king's horses, and all of his men, couldn't tear them apart. Even if they'd tried. (Mericcup Week, day 1)

Birds of a Feather

**As summary says, this prompt was written to celebrate day 1 of Mericcup week, which started today! The song is by The Civil Wars and it's called 'Birds of a Feather' (surely you could tell by the title of this). I really like The Civil Wars, but even if I didn't, I recommend you listen to it!**

**I suck at summarizing prompts, I swear, but I'm quite proud of how this one turned out. Also, it is LONG.**

_**Ah, allow me to **__**note**__**: Merida and Hiccup are older here, probably in their mid twenties. Merida is queen (don't ask me what happened to her parents just do not) and Hiccup is on his way to become chief of his tribe, if he isn't already.**_

**So yeah, enjoy!**

Edit: I have the absolute worst habit of proofreading once the document is already published so I had to reupload to fix a few minor mistakes (and I'm sure I STILL left some laying around). Curse me and my bad habit.

* * *

><p>Where she walks, no flowers bloom

She stared, eyes piercing blue. She stood before her throne with her

arms crossed, proud and tall before him, in a queen's stance. She had the reddest hair he'd ever seen; her mane seemed to float behind her like a fierce, curled halo. Her brows, matching her hair in ginger, were furrowed in a slight frown that narrowed her eyes as she examined him carefully.

He'd seen that girl fight. She was sparring when he'd arrived, and she demanded him to wait so she could finish her work. He obediently stood aside with the guards escorting him and watched her slowly tear a straw dummy to shreds with a sword that looked too heavy for her, which she wielded with ease. But what had really left him in amazement had been the part when she grabbed her bow and arrows and shot targets as she ran. When he saw each arrow flawlessly hitting the bullseye, he'd decided that she was someone no one would want to have as an enemy. So he had to do his best not to make himself one.

That was why he'd been sent on the first place. To offer an alliance, to strengthen the bonds. He'd heard of this girl's fierceness, as her name resounded all through the land. The name of a queen, who was savage and ferocious, yet whose people loved her deeply and loyally. Faced with this apparent contradiction, his curiosity was immediately piqued.

However, as he was under the close scrutiny of her proud eyes, he was beginning to think that maybe this was going to be more difficult than he initially thought.

"So who's this lad again?" she asked, slightly tilting her head to the right.

He held back a sigh. Yes, this was going to be difficult.

He's the one I see right through

The man before her didn't impress her in the slightest. Though tall and with a handsome face, she realized how, through the leather and the armour he wore, he was thin and scrawny. Nothing like the buff, hairy, muscular man she was expecting from the Vikings.

But, anyhow, she had yet to see a man able to impress her. Rather, it was her who impressed others.

He had introduced himself, but she was paying no attention. She had only so much as glanced at him when he arrived, and quickly cut him off by firmly shouting her wish to not be disrupted while she trained. At that moment, when she was one with her weapon, she couldn't care less about a visitor. In fact, she'd left specific instructions to not let anyone in while she sparred. Irritation itched inside her, and she made a mental note to scold the servants later on.

When she considered her training over, she could finally tend to her visitor. She shot a glance of curiosity at him, and she couldn't hide a proud smirk on her face when seeing how he was staring at her in shock. She instructed the servants to let him in the castle and make him comfortable in the great hall while she cleaned and changed herself.

She wouldn't normally have gone through the trouble of changing, but

she'd hear that this concrete visitor was an important one, and that this wasn't exactly a courtesy visit.

When she received him, she examined him a little closer. His hair was quite long, and brown, and by the looks of it, he'd been trying to grow himself a beard, without much of a result. His green eyes were a strange mixture of wary and warm when they looked at her, and he'd bowed before her. She could see his mouth moving, but she was too busy judging him to listen at all. _He's thin as a toothpick,_ she thought, _and that attempt at a beard is just plain ridiculous. And... wow, is that a braid? Snort. He looks like a six year old attempting to look like a grown man_. She found that particularly funny, and she couldn't help herself. She felt an urge to tease this man, whoever he was. And, as the queen, that was something she could do. Without a consequence.

"So who's this lad again?" she asked, slightly tilting her head to the right. She had to contain a satisfied smirk when she saw the look of frustration in his face.

"Hiccup Horrendous Haddock, Your Grace" he reluctantly said. He'd probably repated himself twice before this time.

"Ah, aye" she replied as seriously as she could manage without bursting into laughter. It was no wonder he looked so frustrated of having to repeat himself, with such a horrid name. "Ah am Merida DunBrogh" she added, once she calmed herself down enough for that. "But ye must probably know that."

She's the abscess on my lip

The splinter in my fingertip

When he saw the look of satisfaction in her face, and how she rejoiced herself in teasing him, and how she tried her hardest not to laugh openly, though it was obvious she wanted to, Hiccup decided he didn't like this woman.

Not one bit.

* * *

><p>But who could do without you?

He smiled with pleasure when he saw her staring at the dragon with eyes big and full of wonder.

Toothless was wary of her at first, crouching down and slightly growling. The redhead smelled of danger and wilderness. But when he saw Hiccup smiling at her, and inviting him to come forward, he decided to step ahead and examine the girl closer. Hiccup scented of trust, and of something else.

"Ah had heard" Merida whispered in admiration. She almost didn't dare to move, afraid she would scare or alarm the majestic beast. "Ah had heard, of a far off land, where the people had dragons for _pets_. But Ah never _thought_..."

"That I was one of them?" Hiccup finished for her. "Well, you can see for yourself."

Toothless sniffed at her clothes, at her hair, carefully. His breath tickled her. Smelling closely now, she had the scent of wilderness, yes, but also the scent of wonder and care. Looking at Hiccup for a confirmation, the dragon playfully bumped her cheek to show his approval.

Merida laughed, and her hands reached up to touch his black scales before she even thought of what she was doing. Her fingertips caressed the Night Fury, feeling his rough yet soft texture, and she could verify she, indeed, wasn't dreaming. If someone had told her a few years before this that she would be touching a dragon, she'd have laughed at their face.

She couldn't keep herself from smiling. Everything about this situation was unbelievable. Toothless was strangely cute for a dragon. He reminded her of a black, big cat, with his big friendly eyes of wide black pupils.

"You like each other, huh? Maybe I should leave you two alone?" Hiccup jested, patting his dragon's neck.

"Thanks for ruinin' the beautiful moment, Hic" Merida replied, scornfully. "Appreciate it."

He laughed, and she lightly punched his shoulder. He wouldn't feel anything through the armour, but playfully hitting him like this, was her special way of showing affection.

"Thank ye" she murmured. It was not often she said that, so her cheeks lightly blushed, and she felt shy when looking at him.

"Huh?" he seemed surprised to hear that. "Why?"

"For trustin' me enough to show him to me" was the answer. Though it wasn't the whole truth.

Truth was, Hiccup had truly impressed her. And she, somehow, felt that this impression he'd left wouldn't fade.

She refused to look his way at all, so he had the opportunity to see her flushed face while she petted Toothless. Her cheeks were a shade of red darker than her hair, and her eyes somehow seemed to gleam. Her freckles contrasted against the new colour of her cheeks; he'd never realized she had so many freckles before.

That's how he realized his eyes were lingering on her for too long.

* * *

><p>And who could do without you?

He was close.

She was more conscious of that than she was of the documents she was 'reading'.

After a day of wild riding through the wilderness (of riding dragons, horses, and both), she'd decided she was ready to sign the treaty he

wanted, and which he'd come for in the first place. She trusted him now, it was obvious enough, and she wanted to hear him talk about the ideas he was so passionate about. When he told him so, he seemed really glad. Seeing him smile like that made her happy, though she'd never have admitted it.

So they'd rode back to the castle, laughing at each other like they'd been doing all day. Merida took him up to her 'study', where she was supposed to hold official meetings with the lords and stuff of the sort, and which she hardly even used. She instructed the castle servants not to disturb them, and Hiccup to lit the fireplace while she did so with candles. It was starting to get dark, so they'd need those.

She'd sat on the table, and he'd sat in front of her, and she'd rested her head on her hands and smiled. "Well, enlighten me, then", she said.

He'd smiled back, spread some messily written scrolls and an official-looking document over the table, and began his explanation. Merida had heard him explaining the subject to her a thousand times. The first few, she hadn't been interested at all; she was more interested on finding out who exactly he was and whether she could put her trust in him. She'd only begun to get interested about halfway through, at the five hundredth time or so. She had decided to hear him, and she didn't regret it. Hiccup's ideas were much like hers, she found out, and the terms of the treaty he'd written himself seemed to be satisfying for both parts. She couldn't ask for a better chance to strengthen her kingdom and winning allies that would be powerful and valuable, if the Vikings really were how Hiccup had described them.

The last two hundred times or so, she went back to not listening, because she found herself too interested in seeing his face. Like she was now.

She didn't want to admit, and she would never have said it out loud, that she paid a lot of attention to his face. Especially when he was explaining this stuff. She saw how his face lit up, looking especially happy when she specifically asked him about it, and how his eyes had this gleam of determination and passion in them. She saw the sketches he showed her of improvements in machinery, in communications, and she noticed the meticulous care he put into them, as well as the spark of pride he couldn't hide showing in the green of his eyes. She realized how he wistfully desired for her to listen to him, and to understand. Which she did, really. She knew what he was telling her practically by heart. But he never really got tired of exposing it all, and she never got tired of seeing that expression in his face.

Now, he had gotten up from his seat and positioned himself beside her, so he could point at her the most important clauses of the treaty she was to sign. She desperately tried to pay attention, really, but she got distracted by the heat emanating from his body, by his scent (he smelled like forest and sweat), by how slender his fingers looked as they slid over the paper.

She felt heat rushing to her face. Now was really not the time to be observing him so carefully, not when he was so close. She was afraid her lack of attention and, above all, her feelings would be

betrayed by her face.

"Merida, are you listening to me?"

Crap.

"Y-yeah, of course!" she said it too fast, and too loud. He rolled his eyes at her, his mouth in a slight pout.

"Yeah, right."

"No, Hic, really..."

"You never really listen to me, do you?" he smiled in resignation, his mouth cocked to the side. She felt her cheeks growing hotter.

"A-Ah do!" she protested, clenching the cloth of her dress in her fists. "Ah just... happened to get distracted" she finished the sentence in almost a mumble, pouting and looking away from him. He sighed, rubbing his neck.

"Well, I _have_ explained it to you many times" he admitted, and, lowering his back and tilting his head to look at her turned face, he smiled at her. "So, are you signing it or...?"

She glanced at him from the corner of her eye and huffed in annoyance. "If yoo're gonnae keep pestering me, Ah guess Ah have no other choice."

He laughed and, out of happiness, gave a peck on her cheek, which left her so startled, her trembling hands could barely sign the darned treaty.

* * *

><p>She's the sea I'm sinking in

He could feel her trembling, so he caught her hand into his. She was so close he could feel her breath on his skin, and he could understand why she'd be trembling. This intimate closeness scared him, too.

"What's wrong?" he asked anyway, barely a whisper through the silence of the room, of the whole castle. The fireplace was dying out, and they'd blown off the candles long ago, once she'd signed the treaty. They'd sat by the window and watched the sky as they spoke, with only the moonlight to illuminate the room. How this situation had come to be, he wasn't really sure.

But all of a sudden they'd found themselves leaning towards each other, as if a completely different gravity was pushing them forward. As if it was as natural to stick to each other as it was to stick to the earth.

So close, was all he could think of. _She's so close_.

"Nothin's wrong" she replied, frowning in mild annoyance, then turning her face, so her lips would be farther from his. "Do ye... _mind_?"

Did he mind what?

Mind that she was a wonderful queen? Mind that she had a mane of red hair he was desperate to touch? Mind that she looked so magnificent, it physically hurt to look at her? No.

Mind that she was so desperately close and he couldn't close the gap between them, yes.

Even so, he decided to give her time, and asked. "Do I mind, what?"

"Do ye mind... kissing me?"

His heart thumped loudly. "Are you asking if I want to, or asking me to do it?" by the look in her eyes, she must've really want to punch him at that moment. "Because the answer to both is yes" he mumbled, his voice slightly trembling and a blush covering his cheeks.

She looked up at him then, the 'I want to punch you' look gone, and, after pondering for a moment, she decided to throw herself in his arms and press their mouths together.

It felt like melting. It felt like drowning must feel, but strangely enough, he could breathe. He could, and he was breathing her in as though he was breathing life.

He's the ink under my skin.

He was warm.

Her body adapted to his so easily, it felt like they'd been made to fit. She didn't know if she was more scared or pleased by this fact.

His mouth was... warm, too. All of him was warm, and he felt like home. For some reason, she yearned to deepen the kiss and feel him closer, though that was near impossible.

She knew her heart was beating furiously, but she couldn't feel it. She knew her whole body was hot, but only her brain seemed to be burning. She felt... light-headed, and yet, all she could truly feel, was him. All over.

He was the whole world right then.

Sometimes I can't tell where I am

Where I leave off and he begins

* * *

><p>Oh, we're a pretty, pretty pair

Yes, we are

She sighed, resting her chin over his shoulder. "Ye really have to go?"

"You know I do" he smiled tenderly. He thought it was cute, how she didn't want to let him go. "I have to tell my father I've succeeded on my quest, after all."

"Yeah, but ye can send him a letter" she pouted, puffing out her cheeks. The only reason why he didn't laugh at that expression was that he would've surely gotten punched for laughing at such an unfortunate time. "Yoo've been doin' that the past few weeks ye were here."

"I know, but this is... more important" he sighed, hugging her against his chest. "Don't act like I'm not going to miss you, Merida."

"It's because it seems yoo're not gonnae" she complained. He exhaled in a deep sigh again, rolling his eyes at her.

"What am I going to do with you?" he let go of her and lifted her face with his hand. "I'll be back, you know."

"Yes, but Ah don't know how long it's gonnae take" she mumbled, looking at the ground beneath them with an annoyed frown. Well, he thought she was annoyed, but he couldn't really tell whether it was more annoyance or sadness. "Ye don't live exactly close."

Yes, he knew that too. Berk, his homeland, was days away from the Highlands, and that was riding a dragon's back. Luckily, Toothless didn't get tired exactly often, or else it would even take longer. It was obvious enough he couldn't be coming there and going back everyday. But it was obvious enough he couldn't spend eternity away from home, either. Especially when he'd just gained his tribe the most powerful ally they could wish for. He knew everyone back home would want to know right away, but he'd delayed his departure a few days. On purpose.

After they'd admitted how they felt, after the first kiss they shared, he didn't want to go. He was just entranced by her, and by the power her feelings for her had gotten over him. A woman like her, you don't stumble upon every lifetime. He wanted to make sure she knew how he felt for her, he wanted to explore her, to discover her whole being. He was far from that, yet, and there was nothing he wanted more than to stay longer. But he knew that, the more he delayed it, the hardest it'd be to part. The more he delayed it, the less he'd want to go back to Berk. And he didn't want to leave his father and his tribe behind. He had a duty with them, too. Just like Merida had a responsibility with her kingdom.

"Let's do something" he decided. "I'll visit you once a month. I'll come and stay for at least a day, and then I'll go back. How's that?"

She stood thoughtful for a moment, and Hiccup would've given something to know what was going on behind those blue eyes of hers.

"Alright. Ah guess Ah can expect nothin' better from ye" she sighed, with an expression that led to think she was settling for less than she deserved, which successfully managed to annoy him.

"Oh, forgive me to force you to grace me with your presence. Should I come once a _year_, then?"

She laughed, playfully kissing his nose. "Ah was only jokin'! Ah swear!"

"You're a lost cause."

She giggled, and he rested his forehead over hers.

All, all the king's horses

And all of his men

Couldn't tear us apart.

They stood like that, forehead against forehead, their noses touching and their eyes closed, for a while. Small smiles curved both of their mouths. They knew they would miss each other as if they were missing a part of themselves.

"It's going to be hard, you know" he said, in a soft voice.

"Yeah" she sighed.

But they knew they couldn't give up on each other, either. Not when they'd just discovered an untouched part of their heart.

Merida was the first in opening her eyes.

"Ah love ye" she murmured, softly.

"I love you, too" he uttered, opening his eyes, and she saw fascination in them.

End
file.